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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4450th meeting of the Security Council, held on 16 January 2002, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

The Security Council, recalling all previous resolutions and statements of its President regarding the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report of 13 December 2001 (S/2001/1194).

The Security Council reaffirms the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Council further reaffirms its strong support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, signed in Algiers on 12 December 2000 (S/2000/1183), and the preceding Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities (S/2000/601), signed in Algiers on 18 June 2000 (hereafter referred to collectively as the Algiers Agreements). The Council reaffirms its unwavering commitment to contribute to the completion of the peace process.

The Security Council looks forward to the border delimitation determination by the Boundary Commission, which is final and binding. The Council stresses that in accordance with article 4.15 of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (S/2000/1183), which has the full support of the international community, the Parties have committed themselves to accepting fully the determination of the Boundary Commission.

The Security Council notes that, notwithstanding the outstanding issues, the situation in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) has remained calm with the considerable progress made to date under the peace process preserved.

The Security Council reiterates its strong support for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and calls on the parties to cooperate fully with UNMEE.

The Security Council notes that UNMEE has proved allegations made in the recent past by the parties, including concerning military build-up in the TSZ and adjacent areas north of the zone, to be unfounded. The Council welcomes the recent reduction in the use of rhetoric by the parties and

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encourages them to continue to defuse tension and exercise greater degrees of flexibility in their approaches to the peace process.

The Security Council notes that Eritrea has begun to allow UNMEE to visit some locations in the adjacent area north of the TSZ upon 24-hours' notification and calls again on Eritrea to grant UNMEE the full freedom of movement it requires in this area to allow, in particular, for monitoring of Eritrea's redeployed forces and hence facilitate expeditious responses to any allegations, thereby facilitating mutual confidence.

The Security Council reiterates its call on Eritrea to disclose the number, strength and disposition of its militia and police inside the TSZ and to refrain from deployment close to the southern boundary of the TSZ, thereby facilitating mutual confidence.

The Security Council further reiterates its call on Eritrea to conclude the status-of-forces agreement with the Secretary-General. The Council notes, in this regard, that the model status-of-forces agreement as set out in resolution 1320 (2000) of 15 December 2000 is in effect.

The Security Council notes the information provided by Ethiopia regarding mines and calls on Ethiopia to provide UNMEE with further details on the types of mines used in the TSZ and adjacent areas, as well as more specific information on minefields already cleared by Ethiopian Armed Forces, with the view to facilitate the return to home of internally displaced persons and the forthcoming border demarcation work.

The Security Council expresses its regret that there has been no progress regarding the establishment of a direct high-altitude flight route for UNMEE between Asmara and Addis Ababa. It notes with deep concern that the current extended flight route for UNMEE between the two capitals has significant security, logistical and financial implications. The Council calls on the parties once again to work with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in a spirit of compromise to settle the issue for the mutual benefit of all.

The Security Council, underlining the need for confidence-building measures, calls on the parties to release and return unconditionally and without further delay, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), all the remaining prisoners of war and release all other persons detained as a result of the armed conflict, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the Algiers Agreement. In this regard, the Council welcomes the repatriation yesterday of 25 Ethiopian prisoners of war from Eritrea under the auspices of the ICRC. The Council encourages authorities and civil society in both Ethiopia and Eritrea to afford humane treatment, without discrimination, to each other's nationals and persons of each other's origin within their respective territories.

The Security Council, inviting the parties to make further contributions to fulfil their financial responsibilities regarding the Boundary Commission, expresses its determination to support the practical demarcation of the border. It looks forward to the forthcoming recommendations by the Secretary-General in this regard.

The Security Council, expressing appreciation to those Member States that have already provided voluntary contributions, calls on Member States in a position to do so to provide further support to the peace process and to alleviate the difficult humanitarian situation and, where conditions allow, help facilitate reconstruction and development in both countries, including by making contributions through the following channels:

(a) United Nations Consolidated Appeals process for 2002;

(b) United Nations Trust Fund to Support the Peace Process in Ethiopia-Eritrea; and, in light of paragraph 13 above,

(c) United Nations Trust Fund for the Delimitation and Demarcation of the Border established pursuant to resolution 1177 (1998).

The Security Council confirms its intention to send a mission to the two countries in February 2002.